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Group factors influencing the majority of Cameroonian consumers' attitudes towards counterfeits products

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Abstract: Counterfeiting is a serious issue in developing economies, and many authentic marques have fallen victim to it. Counterfeit products deceive consumers and cause an increase in the demand for lower-cost replications, which can devalue authentic products. The paper investigates the influential factors that motivate Cameroonian consumers' intent to purchase counterfeits. The construction of our model is inspired by the theory of buyer behavior, recognized by several researchers as the most reliable construct. The association between the utility theory and the theory of planned behavior is introduced for the first time in this study. We compute the Pearson correlation Coefficient, calculate the Cronbach alpha, and run Binary Logistic Regressions using a sample of 1,000 Cameroonians (males and females) living or who have lived in China. The findings show that, more than any other element under consideration, economic reasons account for disparities in Cameroonian attitudes towards counterfeit goods. The findings validate the variables' effects on Cameroonian consumers' opinions of and intentions to buy counterfeit goods, supporting the stated predictions. Counterfeit sales have grown into a multibillion-dollar industry, and identifying the reasons behind consumers' motivation and intention to buy counterfeit products rather than original ones can be beneficial to both policymakers and firms. This paper might affect these stakeholders' thoughts and/or actions towards counterfeits. As a result, they can develop strategies to combat the availability of counterfeit products and interact with Cameroonian consumers.

Keywords: *Attitude, Cameroon, Counterfeit, Economic and marketing factors, Perceive risk, Personality factors, Purchase intention, Risk factors, Socio-cultural factors.*

1. Introduction

Counterfeiting is prevalent in the majority of emerging industries around the world. Numerous products, including foods, films, fertilisers, pharmaceuticals, software, machinery shares, and music, are affected by the phenomenon. There are two types of counterfeiting that are diametrically opposed: deceptive and non-deceptive. The deceptive form represents a scenario in which the customer is unaware that he or she is purchasing a replica rather than an authentic product, so the customer is not responsible for the actions he or she takes. The customer in the non-deceptive form, however, buys counterfeit goods purposely [1, 2]. The simplest definition of counterfeit is provided by Lai and Zaichkowsky [3]: "counterfeit is a 100% direct reproduction of a high-value brand outcome, though most of the time with medium quality". Bosworth [4], regarding the deceptive spectrum, innovates by using the terms "super deceptive" and "completely non-deceptive". For him, a counterfeit product is "super deceptive" in situations where authentic and fake products look indistinguishable and identical. Then, consumers

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extremely face difficulties in separating both outcomes. A counterfeit product is completely non-deceptive in the circumstance where any consumer can easily distinguish a fake product from the original one. Obviously, it's very difficult for customers to recognise counterfeit products because their quality has improved over time [5]. Components of purchase intentions for counterfeits considerably differ from components of purchase intentions for original outcomes in circumstances where customers are aware of the probability of deception. So, the level of deception is related to the awareness and experience of the customer. Hübner [6] argues that counterfeit goods markets are comprised of two submarkets: the deceptive market, in which people purchase counterfeits believing they are original goods, and the non-deceptive market, in which people intend to purchase plagiarised articles. When deciding on particular strategies to combat the phenomenon, he deems it essential to increase the threat level of any individual. The effective existence of counterfeits on the market disturbs the manufacturers' management of authentic brands. Consequently, initiatives should be taken to restrict and limit the delivery of original branded outcomes in order to preserve their high value and demand [7]. The risk of damaging the reputation of the brand is the greatest danger manufacturer's face, as the brand's reputation and notoriety are crucial for authentic brands. Genuine brands are extremely vulnerable due to the prevalence of counterfeit products [7]. Significant harm is caused by the presence of counterfeit products. According to the organised crime division of the FBI, the 21st century's crime will be forgery [8]. From 2000 to 2006, the European Commission seized approximately 273% more counterfeit products. This amount represents between 5 and 7 percent of total global trade (ICC Commercial Crime Services, 2012). The most common desecration is the counterfeiting of corporate logos, which accounts for 92% of the European Union's seized merchandise [9].

This study examines the underlying motivations that drive Cameroonian customers' inclination towards purchasing counterfeit items.

2. Review of the Selected Literature

Although the study of counterfeiting is generally thought of as a relatively new field of study, it has actually been the subject of academic inquiry since the 1970s. Because of the severity of the threat it poses to the legal industry, there has been a flood of articles on the subject in both popular and specialized publications in recent years. Increasing amounts of new information are being added to the field annually. Prior research on counterfeiting, product piracy, and counterfeits can be found in the databases of electronic journals such as Elton B. Stephane Company (EBSCO), host Business, and ProQuest ABI/INFORM. Many different aspects of counterfeiting have been covered in published works. With this in mind, five classifications are developed in order to highlight the knowledge of the subject:

The global view of the phenomenon expressed in terms of counterfeiting general descriptions;

Brand value, income, factors affecting manufacturers of high-quality product, their accountability prerogatives will constitute the quantitative examination.

Concerns of the supply side in relation to locations of manufacture, motivation of illicit actors, strategies, and channels used to deliver counterfeits;

Attitudes and behaviours of customers, management recommendations to circumvent replica, practical, tactical, or managerial strata for the company's suitable management, and;

Legislative anxieties and legal subjects discussing intellectual property rights.

2.1. General Description of Counterfeiting

In terms of available information about counterfeit products, general descriptions of counterfeit products predominate. Press, publications, and government, organization, and business reports provide these general descriptions. Publications typically detail instances concerning counterfeiting operations. The prevalence of counterfeits on the market, significant confiscations, and the prevalence and evolution of the problem.

Articles appear to be extremely prolific in terms of information that cannot reflect, for instance, neither the nature of the phenomena nor the conditions that inspire additional research. Counterfeiting is

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not considered a distinct field of research but rather an extension of other disciplines. Marketing science, which constantly addresses consumer behaviour aspects, is the field comprising the majority of academic research papers on counterfeiting. Typically, investigations into the impact of counterfeit trade focus on statistics about market share and subsequent evaluations demonstrating financial influences on the quantity of replica goods. Publications from different sources, including industry white papers, professional newspapers, government reports [9], scientific publications [5], legal advice, and the press, regularly provide estimates of the scale of the counterfeiting trade. Approximately 5% of global manufacturing belongs to counterfeiting [10].

2.2. Counterfeits

Discussions about brand piracy are frequent in academic journals. There is no consensus on the definition of Counterfeiting among academics, researchers, company managers, and other interested parties. Despite plentiful literature on counterfeiting, no consensus emerges concerning the definition of counterfeiting [1]. The term piracy is preferred by some researchers [11], while others recognised unadulterated distinctions between diverse reproduction forms of brand-name outcomes: counterfeiting, grey market, piracy, replica brand, and superfluous products [3]. For other researchers interested in the phenomenon, counterfeiting is just a violation of intellectual property rights (IPR). Illicit equivalent imports, digital piracy, and copyright violations distinguish themselves [12].

In effective literature and theoretical advancements on counterfeiting, counterfeits are trademark-branded reproductions that resemble or are differentiated from genuine products [13]. Among the replica characteristics are labelling, packaging, and trademarks that are purposefully planned to resemble the originals [11, 14]. In principle, piracy and counterfeiting are equivalent because both involve replicas or exact copies of the original goods [3]. These two words are recurrently used interchangeably [15]. The consumers of counterfeit goods are classified into two types. The first type of counterfeit's consumer identified is the victim or sufferer. Due to the similarity between counterfeit and authentic goods, customers unintentionally and inadvertently purchase counterfeit goods under the impression that they are purchasing original goods [1, 16-18]. In contrast, the second type of customer identified is either an accomplice or an enthusiastic purchaser of counterfeit products. In this circumstance, the customer is aware of the unlawfulness of the operation, so he or she assumes the risk of purchasing counterfeit goods [13, 18, 19]. Brand equity and symbolic value of authentic branded goods are decreased by attitudes towards counterfeiting [17]. When it is difficult to distinguish quality differences, counterfeit goods serve as cheaper alternatives to expensive luxury goods [5]. Customers of counterfeit products frequently pay for the appearance and functionality of the product rather than the quality of the original brand [1, 13].

Counterfeiting activities are developed in China and continue to rise [15, 18]. The level of innovations and advances in high-tech, as well as globalization and low-cost production, easily facilitate the manufacture of counterfeits [5]. The rapid economic growth of China is the primary explanation for the rising demand for counterfeit products. Without severe threats and punishment for their counterfeiting accomplishments, counterfeit producers and their syndicates continue their counterfeiting activities. The application of intellectual property law-making by governments is still fragmented with errors and dodges. Attitudes towards counterfeits positively influence buying intentions [11, 20, 21].

2.3. Supply-Side Investigations

Contraband supply-side investigations have received little attention from academics. Knowledge about the counterfeit supply side is crucial for understanding illicit market motivations. It's about how corporations in emerging markets use reproduction to stimulate knowledge and development on the one hand and, on the other hand, to understand how producers of authentic brands are combating counterfeiting. The supply-side literature on counterfeiting is scarce due to the remoteness of the information on the illicit black market. Harvey and David [22] have significantly investigated the counterfeiting supply-side by devising potential methods by which illegal actors could acquire the expertise required to manufacture counterfeit goods. Despite the fact that their research is based on the

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assumption that intellectual property is lifted from affected companies, this doesn't imply that counterfeit industries currently possess significant competencies. Multiple supply-side factors are counterfeiters' additional motivations [23-26]. Amongst the factors are: the absence of rigors in intellectual property rights tribunals in most developing countries (China, South Africa) where grey products are manufactured; the probability of realizing higher profit margins; the feebleness to reprimand counterfeiters because of their activities in the same way as other illegal activity architects; and fakers exploiting the high marketing and research and development (R&D) expenses of legal brand owners. This has led to an increase in counterfeiting activities in these nations.

The insufficiency of punishments has resulted in the development of a counterfeiting industry, which is further facilitated by the accessibility of advanced technology. This enables counterfeiters to efficiently make imitation luxury-branded products at reduced expenses and with increased speed. The proliferation of counterfeit goods has been facilitated by the existence of free ports and free trade zones, primarily due to the absence of stringent mechanisms for tracing the authentic origins of these products. The Internet plays a pivotal role in facilitating the accessibility of counterfeit products. Internet channels provide makers of grey goods with a convenient means of distributing their items through direct marketing strategies. The Internet serves as an optimal platform for discreetly targeting and engaging with consumers. Counterfeiting is a longstanding phenomenon that has endured across several historical periods, and the present conditions have created a conducive setting for its widespread occurrence.

2.4. Demand Side Investigations

Research on the counterfeiting demand side is limited and primarily focuses on purchase intentions or attitudes, awareness, and demographics. In their investigation on the correlation between the demand-price relationship in counterfeit markets and luxury brands, Grossman and Shapiro [1] didn't find proper characteristics based on counterfeit product demand. Factors not necessarily related to the issue under investigation were eliminated. Gentry, et al. [5] delivered evidence used to recognize counterfeit goods and make purchase decisions while preventing the buying of counterfeit goods. According to the economic fundamental logic, the lack of demand for replica products exposes that it must erode supply. In reality, the prevalence of counterfeit products is increasing among customers [23, 27]. Marketing literature explains that counterfeits are both less expensive and of inferior quality. Conversely, the exclusiveness of luxury brands is threatened by the greater availability of counterfeit goods on the market [1, 3, 28]. Persons buy replicas for two important reasons: the similarity to authentic products and their low price, and the significant value that brand utilities provide [8, 13]. As long as counterfeits continue to offer advantages comparable to those of luxury brand products, they will remain desirable [8].

2.5. Legal Issues and Legislative Concerns

Maskus [29] offered a comprehensive IPR synopsis of literature concerning counterfeits. So, intellectual property rights are incremental for international trade. Lewis [30] conducted an analysis of the economic implications of trade protection and proposed a strategic approach that emphasizes the role of private enterprises. The author encouraged owners and managers of these companies to prioritize safeguarding their goods rather than relying solely on punitive business legislation. Moores and Jerry [31] made a comparative research study between developing and developed countries and discovered that the divergence between both relates to the low level of protection found in developing nations while the high level of protection is found in developed nations. Qian [32], when constructing a game-theoretical perspective by examining IPR violations in the context of social quandaries, illustrated the conflicting welfare of developing and developed nations by utilising the prisoner's dilemma.

In their study, Parthasarathy and Mittelstaedt [33] conducted an experimental investigation focused on examining the impact of enforcement levels on the structure of foreign direct investment (FDI). The results of their study showed that feeble IPR regimes discouraged investors and financiers from investing in local fabrication but encouraged them to buy imports.

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2.6. Managerial Guidelines to Avert Counterfeit Trade

The purpose of the current body of literature is to provide better guidance for those who define anti-counterfeiting strategies and policies. Harvey and Walls [34] identified corporate countermeasures against counterfeiting. Among these strategies are heating, impeachment, transfer, and extraction. Singh [35] presented a comprehensive framework for the development and execution of anti-counterfeiting strategies. Within the realm of strategies, there exist several approaches, namely "educating stakeholders at the source," "implementing high-tech labelling," and "co-opting offenders." The strategy's weakness lies in the absence of recommendations for operationalization. One notable research study pertaining to managerial strategies for preventing counterfeit trade is the investigation conducted by Chow [36]. This study examines the methods through which managers can enhance the intellectual property environment, the prevalent anti-counterfeiting measures employed, the implementation of these measures in the country that hosts the market, and the potential influence of the environment on market entry decisions.

3. Theories and Hypothesis

3.1. Theories

The theory of buyer behaviour built by Howard and Sheth [37] is the foundation on which this research is constructed. To conduct our research, we associated the utility theory and the theory of planned behaviour with the theory of buyer behaviour for the first time. Several researchers, academics, and even practitioners acknowledge the theory of Howard and Sheth as the most reliable and valid framework. By providing a comprehensive understanding of the buyer's decision-making procedure, four essential constituents come from this theory. They are: theoretical concepts; exogenous variables; stimulus variables; and response variables. This led to a high-point commercial environment as well as service and product qualities that motivated customers. To satisfy their motives via education concepts, purchasers' inducements offer action incentives and stir replacement sets.

The theory of planned behaviour (TPB), considered the most influential expectancy-value theory, is still employed in a variety of behavioural domains [28]. Through the Theory of Reasoned Action (TRA), the TPB has expressively honed its jutting attitudes [38]. The TPB's foundation is the Theory of Reasoned Action [39]. TRA purpose is the prediction and explicit comprehension of the behaviour in particular circumstances [38]. According to the TPB, an individual's behavioural intention directly influences the individual's current behaviour, which is concurrently determined by the behaviour's achievement. The TPB believes that resources and likelihoods, like counterfeit accessibility, must motivate purchase behaviour in order to enhance it. Additionally, the TPB is an optimal research intention model for predicting and explaining behaviour across a variety of fields [40]. Demographic and psychographic factors have been included in the Ajzen [38] work, which concentrated on TPB's leadership in configuring current results and integrating additional variables. The TPB has been successfully applied in western culture and till date, no solid evidence proves that it may be adapted to other cultures [41].

Thaler made significant contributions to the development of utility theory in 1985. In the context of consumer purchases, there are two types of utility: acquisition utility and transaction utility. The acquisition utility refers to economic purchase situations (gain or loss), while the transaction utility represents emotional situations (pleasure or displeasure) in combination with the transaction terms of financial purchase. Individuals are predisposed to become value-conscious as opposed to coupon-motivated due to the impact of the product's inherent need for capacity satisfaction [42]. According to the counterfeit theory, the driving force behind the acquisition of replicas is their low price due to their perceived low quality. In this way, the utility theory is strikingly similar to the counterfeit theory. The primary reason for the acquisition of counterfeits is that their price is acknowledged to be a fraction of the price of genuine goods, so purchasing counterfeits avoids the risk of buying high-priced, luxurious products [17]. Despite their inferior quality, counterfeit products offer a reasonable price [8].

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3.2. Hypotheses

Consumers in less developed nations and cultures with a stronger emphasis on collectivism are more likely to purchase counterfeit goods. This study's research hypotheses are founded on the following variables: counterfeit proneness, risk factors, personality factors, socio-cultural factors, economic factors, marketing factors, and attitude. We think these variables are factors that should affect the attitudes of Cameroonian consumers towards their intentions to buy reproduction. The available literature and the corroboration that China is one of the world's countries where counterfeiting is tolerated inspired the hypotheses construction. Additionally, the fact that Cameroon is a developing country also played a role in our decision to conduct this research.

1- The propensity for counterfeiting undeniably influences the attitudes of Cameroonian consumers in relation to their intention to purchase counterfeit products.
2- There is no positive relationship between risk factors and Cameroonian consumers' attitudes towards intentions to purchase counterfeits.
3- There is positive relationship between personality factors and the Cameroonian consumers' intention to purchase counterfeits.
4- There is a positive relationship between socio-cultural factors and the Cameroonian consumer's intentions to purchase counterfeits.
5- There is a positive relationship between economic factors and the Cameroonian consumer's intentions to purchase counterfeits.
6- There is a positive relationship between marketing factors and the Cameroonian consumer's intentions to purchase counterfeits.
7- Attitude is a motivating factor for Cameroonian consumer's intention to purchase counterfeits.

4. Methodology

4.1. Methods

In order to collect the necessary data for this investigation, a variety of approaches were considered. Both inductive and deductive strategies are utilized for this research paradigm, as well as both qualitative and quantitative methods, as they are complementary to the two types of research [43, 44]. Primary and secondary sources of information are used for this study. We collected data directly from the consumers in Cameroon regarding their perceptions of counterfeits, attitudes, and purchase intentions regarding counterfeit products. We employed a survey that included both self-administered and semi-structured questionnaires, as well as interviews with closed-ended questions. For the purpose of analyzing the data, Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS), specifically Binary Logistic Regression, Cronbach's Alpha, and Pearson Coefficient, was utilized. We collected one thousand responses from members of the sample population who reside or have resided in China and make purchases in the same markets. Questionnaires were distributed in person, online, and through the mail.

The measurement scales utilized in this study were developed based on a comprehensive review of relevant literature. These scales were subsequently modified and adjusted in accordance with the methodologies employed by Ang, et al. [11], Bearden, et al. [45], Eastman, et al. [46], Lichtenstein, et al. [47], Nia and Lynne Zaichkowsky [48], Stone and Grønhaug [49], Sweeney, et al. [50], and Wang, et al. [51]. The development of questionnaires involved a systematic approach, implemented in several stages, utilizing the Likert Scale Structure. The Likert scale is a measurement tool that assigns numerical values ranging from 1 to 5 to indicate the degree of agreement or disagreement with a given statement, with 1 representing strong disagreement and 5 representing strong agreement. Furthermore, the participants were provided with the option to indicate their demographic profile by selecting or circling the corresponding item. Furthermore, the respondents were provided with a binary choice, namely "yes" or "no," in response to the initial query pertaining to their vulnerability to counterfeiting.

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4.2. Data Presentation

The respondent's characteristics summary is the starting point of this study. They concern gender, age, level of income, and level of education. We follow by the examination of the linear correlations between variables as well as the variable's interactions with the odds ratio in favour of a customer intentionally purchasing counterfeits using statistical methods to ensure the data's validity. We also utilised SPSS to create tables and graphs depicting and summarising the various perspectives gathered from questionnaire responses.

4.3. Technique for Analysing the Group Factors That Influence Cameroonian Consumers' Attitudes towards Purchasing Counterfeit Genuine Products

The analysis of the factors influencing the attitudes of Cameroonian towards their intentions to buy counterfeits was done using the Pearson Correlation Coefficient. The equation below helped to establish the strength and direction of all linear connotations between the matching data suites.

$$r = \frac{\sum_{i=1}^{n}(x_i - \bar{x})(y_i - \bar{y})}{\sqrt{\sum_{i=1}^{n}(x_i - \bar{x})^2}\sqrt{\sum_{i=1}^{n}(y_i - \bar{y})^2}} \qquad (1)$$

In this equation:

r represents the Pearson's correlation coefficient for the sample, n refers to the sample size, x_i signifies the to the terminologies in the dataset $\{x_1, \ldots, x_n\}$, $\bar{x}$ stands as the sample mean calculated as $\frac{1}{n}\sum_{i=1}^{n} x_i$, y_i is the terminologies in the dataset $\{y_1, \ldots, y_n\}$, $\bar{y}$ refers to the sample mean calculated as $\frac{1}{n}\sum_{i=1}^{n} y_i$.

We interpreted the Pearson correlation coefficient (r) and the degree of association based on commonly accepted criteria. From 0.1 to 0.3, the r value is small; from 0.3 to 0.5, it is medium; and from 0.5 to 1.0, it is large. Every r value's symbol indicates the direction of correlation.

4.4. Method for Analysing the Factors That Influence the Probability That Cameroonians Will Buy Counterfeits

To further analyse the factors that influence the probability that customers will purposely buy counterfeits, we used a Binary Logistic Regression Model.

The following is the general model:

$$\log\left(\frac{P_i}{1-P_i}\right) = \beta_0 + \beta_i \sum_{i=1}^{n} X_i + U_i \qquad (2)$$

Here:

P_i : is the possibility that a Cameroonian will purposely buy counterfeits.

$1 - P_i$: is the possibility that a Cameroonian will not purposely buy counterfeits.

$\frac{P_i}{1-P_i}$: is the odds ratio in favour of a customer purposely buying counterfeits

B_0 : is the intercept

B_i : is coefficients estimated in the model

X_i : regroups explanatory variables: Economic factors, Marketing factors, Socio-cultural, Risk factors, and Group influences

U_i : is an Error term.

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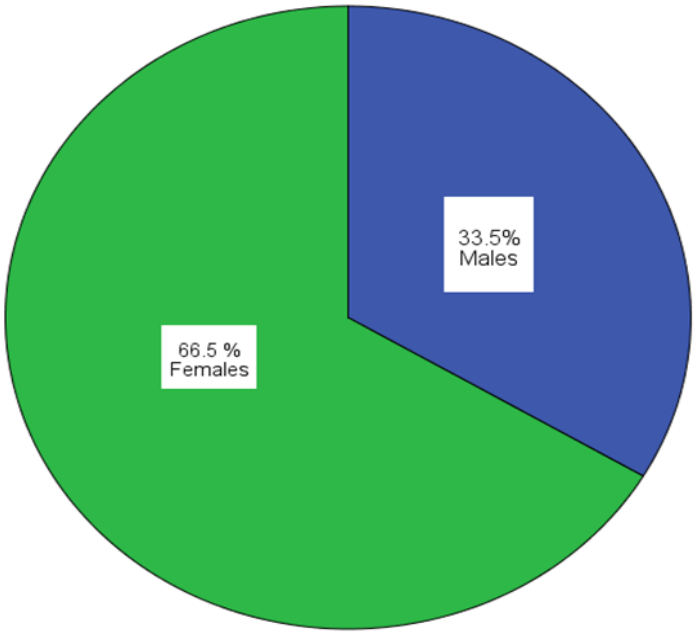

Figure 1.
The distribution of respondents by gender.

5. Results and Analyses

5.1. Demographic Depiction of Respondents

5.1.1. Gender

Figure 1 reveals that the majority of respondents are female and represent 66.5% of the sample, while males represent only 33.5%. The interpretation shows that women have a higher shopping intention than men.

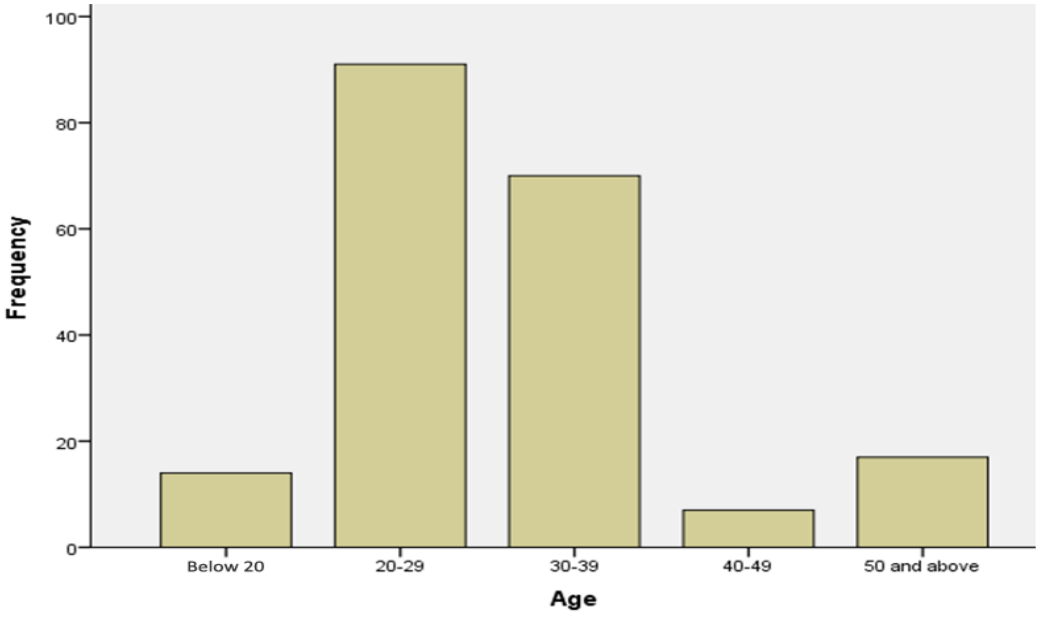

Figure 2.
The respondents' representation by age.

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5.1.2. Age

The above Figure 2 demonstrates that the age of the majority of respondents varies from 20 to 29. This age interval expresses the youthful nature of the respondents. This situation could potentially impact the individuals' income levels as the majority of them are currently pursuing their studies and have limited involvement in economic activities.

Table 1.
The respondent's educational attainment.

Proportion of education level	Education level					Total
	College diploma	First degree	Masters	PhD.	Post-doc	
	29%	18%	24%	15%	14%	100%

5.1.3. Education

Table 1 shows that most of the respondents possess a Bachelor's degree or a higher level of education. 18%, 24%, 15%, and 14% of the respondents had a Bachelor's, Master's, PhD, and Post-Doc respectively.

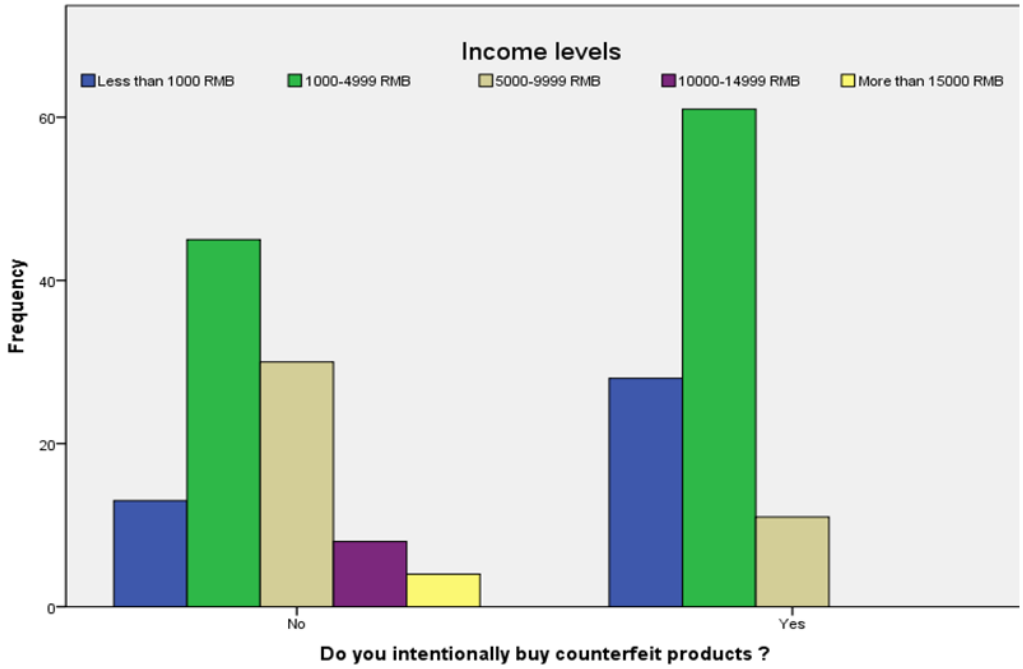

Figure 3.
The breakdown of respondents' income levels.

5.1.4. Respondents' Income Level

According to Figure 3 above, most of Cameroonian's customers who buy counterfeits are average to low-income earners. Contrarily, few respondents with more than 10,000 RMB (Renminbi, Chinese currency) monthly buy hardly, if ever, counterfeit products. Furthermore, Figure 3 proves that the general postulation that all earners of low-income have a positively impacted attitude towards counterfeit products might not be exact because some people with less than 10,000 RMB income still avoid purchasing replicas.

Table 2 below presents the Cronbach's Alpha for each set of factors relating to the latent variable and the global Cronbach's alpha.

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Table 2.
Reliability analysis.

Latent variable	Cronbach's alpha	Cronbach's alpha on homogeneous items	Mean	Var.	Standard dev.	Num. of items
Counterfeit proneness						
Risk factors	0.75	0.73	8.92	7.65	2.77	5
Personality factors	0.87	0.87	43.36	46.62	6.83	11
Socio-cultural determinants	0.90	0.91	23.79	21.91	4.68	7
Economic determinants	0.95	0.95	8.67	12.67	3.56	4
Marketing factors	0.87	0.87	29.96	31.35	5.599	9
Attitude and intention	0.95	0.96	22.67	101.1	10.06	10
Overall Cronbach's alpha	0.90	0.88	146.91	380.35	19.50	46

5.1.5. Reliability and Scale Statistics

The Cronbach's Alpha for each set of factors relating to the latent variable exceeds 0.70. The data yielded a global Cronbach's alpha of 0.90, which, according to the rule of thumb, is a satisfactory indication of internal reliability. Thus, the questionnaires measure the items in a unidimensional manner.

Table 3 exhibits the Pearson correlation coefficient of the marketing factors that influence the customer's intention to buy counterfeits.

Table 3.
The Pearson coefficient of marketing factors.

Intention to purchase counterfeits in contradiction of:	Pearson coefficient (PC)
The reliance on WeChat as a primary source of product information	0.830***
The reliance on Facebook as a primary source of product information	0.184***
The reliance on WhatsApp as a source of product information	0.742***
The reliance on window shopping for obtaining product information.	0.600***
Reliance on the internet for product information	0.263***
Reliance on pamphlets	0.200***
Reliance on word-of-mouth for product info	0.447***

Note: ***significant at 0.01 level.

5.2. The Marketing Factors Influencing the Customer's Intention to Buy Counterfeits

Most of the variables under examination, notably social network marketing, internet searches, word-of-mouth, personal publicity via window shopping, and printed media like pamphlets, are the primary marketing factors that strongly influence consumers' intentions to purchase counterfeits. All of the variables show statistically significant associations with the intention to purchase replica items at a significance level of 0.01. The results of the study indicate a significant positive correlation between WeChat marketing (correlation coefficient = 0.830) and WhatsApp marketing (correlation coefficient = 0.742) in relation to the Cameroonian consumer's inclination to engage in the purchase of counterfeit goods. As a result of China's technological advancement, there is no doubt that customers, due to the frequent usage of mobile applications, are progressively exposed to counterfeit product information. On the other hand, we notice that WeChat, due to its facile accessibility, exerts a considerable influence on consumers' purchase behaviour, specifically among China-based consumers constrained by government social media regulations that promote WeChat over WhatsApp. This rationality might further be applied to customers obtaining product information through Facebook. The reason is that Facebook's correlation coefficient of 0.19 is considered a feeble association because of China's Great Wall, which constrains the use of this application within Chinese boundaries. The correlation coefficient of 0.600 demonstrates that window shopping also has a great influence on the determination of consumers' purchase attitudes. Referring to the indication of a moderate correlation of 0.447, the marketing force of counterfeits is

dependent on the consumers' aptitude to spread positive appreciation for them. Even though some purchasers of counterfeits acquired product information from the internet, a correlation coefficient of 0.263 shows a fairly feeble association. The reason for this weak correlation is the fact that, despite the relevance of the internet and its contribution to modern marketing, most manufacturers and traders of replicas fear exposing and selling their products on the internet, so they cannot be identified. Results show that when a counterfeit is displayed online, consumers' intentions to purchase may increase. Even if the correlation coefficient of 0.200 is considered insignificant by the rule of thumb, pamphlets are also important predictors of consumers' purchase intentions.

Table 4 presents the estimates of the logistic regression of the marketing factors that influence consumer's intentions to purchase counterfeits.

Table 4.
Marketing factors that could influence the likelihood that a customer will purposely purchase counterfeits.

Variables	Coef.	S. E	Wald	Df	Sign.	Odds ratio	95% I.I. for odds ratio.	
							Lower	Upper
Product availability	6.662	2.924	5.192	1	0.023**	781.76	2.538	240801.1
General advertising	5.195	1.840	7.972	1	0.005***	180.32	4.897	6639.882
WeChat marketing	8.698	2.961	8.628	1	0.003***	5990.21	18.071	1985676.1
WhatsApp marketing	1.290	1.159	1.239	1	0.266	3.634	0.375	35.249
Facebook marketing	2.484	1.409	3.111	1	0.078*	11.992	0.758	189.597
Internet adverts	1.633	1.180	1.917	1	0.166	5.120	0.507	51.693
Word of mouth	8.278	2.818	8.628	1	0.003***	3936.55	15.712	986289.9
Newspaper advertising	4.639	1.834	6.400	1	0.011**	103.44	2.843	3763.432
Physical surrounding	2.799	1.416	3.906	1	0.048**	16.436	1.023	263.948
Constant	-21.73	7.160	9.211	1	0.002***	0.000	-	-

Note: Significant at *10%; **5%; ***1%, and S.E is the standard error.

Table 5 summarizes the Pearson correlation coefficients of marketing factors that influence Cameroonian costumers' intent to buy counterfeit products.

Table 5.
Underneath encapsulates marketing factors that influence Cameroonian costumers' intention to buy counterfeits.

Attitude to purchase counterfeits against:	PC
Dependence on product availability	0.759***
The reliance on WhatsApp as a source of product information	0.239***
The reliance on WeChat as a primary source of product information	0.760***
The reliance on Facebook as a source of product information.	0.611***
The reliance on internet explorations for obtaining product information	0.107***
Reliance on window shopping	0.155***
Reliance on word-of-mouth	0.596***

Note: *** is significance at the 0.01 level.

The preceding table shows that Cameroonians appear to rely on Product availability. They use WeChat to obtain product information. For product information, they rely increasingly on WhatsApp, Facebook, and word of mouth.

Table 6.
Pearson coefficient of economic determinants influencing the customer's commitment to purchase counterfeits.

Attitude to purchase counterfeits against:	PC
Unaffordability of authentic goods	0.870***
Individual evaluation of price-quality judgment	0.870***
Contentment with the price-quality link for purchase choices	0.540***
Cheaper counterfeits	0.806***

Note: *** is significant at the 0.01 level.

5.3. The Economic Factors Influencing the Customer's Attitude towards the Intention to Buy Counterfeits

The primary economic factors that significantly impact a consumer's inclination to purchase counterfeit products include the prices of the products, the price of authentic items, and the individual customer's subjective evaluation of pricing. The inference of quality is directly correlated with the market price. Significant correlations were observed between all variables and the intention to purchase counterfeit products, with a significance level of 0.01. Persons purchased and used counterfeits due to their low price. The positive and significant correlation coefficient of 0.806 proved this rationality. The majority of counterfeits' consumers are furthermore motivated by the supposed original product's high price, as indicated by the high correlation of 0.87. The 0.872 correlation coefficient, which is supported by the two preceding explanations, demonstrates that before making a purchase decision, consumers of counterfeit goods take time to evaluate the expected attribute of the goods in relation to their price. As depicted by the correlation coefficient of 0.536, though customers compare the quality of goods with their monetary value, another significant determinant of customers' purchase behaviour is the market's common price level satisfaction.

Table 7 presents the estimates of the logistic regression of the Economic factors that influence consumer's intention to purchase counterfeits.

Table 7.
Economic factors that influence the customer's intent to buy counterfeits.

Variables	Coef.	S. E	Wald	Df	Sig.	Odds ratio	95%C.I. for odds ratio	
							Lower	Upper
Inexpensive counterfeits	4.121	1.380	8.919	1	0.003***	61.623	4.123	921.113
High prices of authentic items	5.400	1.484	13.231	1	0.000***	221.360	12.064	4061.545
Individual evaluation of price-quality link	3.740	1.275	8.601	1	0.003***	42.111	3.458	512.849
Reliance on pricing	3.885	1.539	6.377	1	0.012**	48.688	2.386	993.425
Constant	-8.467	2.049	17.080	1	0.000***	0.000	-	-

Note: ***significant at 0.01 level.

Table 7 confirms, at a significance level of 5%, that price is the most influential factor in consumers' purchase decisions regarding counterfeit products. As shown in Table 7, customers who don't have enough money to purchase original luxury goods are most likely to rely on counterfeits. The vast majority of customers of counterfeits behave according to their economic revenues. This evidence is proven by the 1% significance level.

Table 8 provides an itemization of the Pearson correlation coefficients of the economic factors that influence Cameroonian consumers' intention to buy counterfeits.

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Table 8.
Summary of the economic factors influencing Cameroonian consumers' intention to buy counterfeits.

Attitude to purchase counterfeits against:	PC
Cheaper counterfeits	0.825***
Unaffordability of genuine products	0.834***
Individual evaluation of buying power before purchasing	0.891***
Reliance on pricing before purchase choices	0.527***

Note: ***significant correlations at the 0.01 level.

Decisions are primarily influenced by the low price of counterfeit goods and a rigors evaluation of an individual's purchasing power. The majority of the respondents continue to base their purchasing decisions primarily on price.

Table 9 provides a breakdown of the Pearson correlation coefficients of personality and preference factors that influence Cameroonian consumers' intentions to purchase counterfeits.

Table 9.
PC of personality and preference factors.

Attitude to purchase counterfeits against:	PC
Desire to be wealthy enough to buy everything desired	0.141**
The inclination to acquire high-quality goods	0.784***
Focus on material possessions	0.852***
Procuring goods that align with consumer's personality	0.712***
Inclination to pay more for products with status	0.451***
Triviality of a product with status	0.140**
Influence of prestigious product with snob appeal	0.201**

Note: **Significant at 0.05 level; ***significant at 0.01 level.

5.4. Personality and Preferences Factors Affecting Customers' Intention to Buy Counterfeits

Several personal characteristics and preferences were identified as factors that impact consumers' intentions to engage in the purchase of counterfeit goods. The statistically significant relationships, with a significance level of 0.01, encompass various aspects. These include a focus on material possessions, a propensity to acquire high-quality items, the preference for products that align with the consumer's personality, a willingness to pay a premium for products associated with status, the impact of physical appearance, and the aspiration to attain sufficient wealth to fulfil all desired purchases. The research findings indicate that a significant number of consumers with a preference for purchasing high-quality products deliberately choose to buy counterfeit goods. The coefficient of 0.784% exhibits a robust and favourable relationship. Furthermore, our research reveals that consumers who prioritize physical attributes during the purchase of a product generally exhibit a lack of concern for the item's authenticity. The correlation coefficient of 0.852 provides empirical evidence that supports the strength and directionality of this perspective. A coefficient of 0.712 suggests that there is a positive correlation between the propensity to purchase counterfeit goods and the inclination to align one's personality traits with those of the consumer. According to the coefficient of 0.451, the findings additionally suggest that individuals who purchase counterfeit goods exhibit a propensity to allocate higher monetary value towards products associated with social status.

Other variables showed significant relationships at the 0.05 level, including product status triviality, market environment, and product quality judgment when making purchasing choices. According to the correlation coefficient of 0.201, a prestigious product with snob appeal slightly influences consumers' voluntary purchases of counterfeits. Whether a product is counterfeit is unimportant if it serves the occasion. The weak but positive 0.140 association explains this. Consumers who want to be wealthy and buy everything choose almost-authentic imitation goods, according to a correlation coefficient of 0.141.

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Table 10 shows personality and preference variables that affect consumers' willingness to buy counterfeit goods.

Table 10.
Personality and preference factors.

Variables	Coef.	S. E	Wald	Df	Sig.	Odds ratio	95% C.I. for odds ratio	
							Lower	Upper
The aspiration to be wealthy enough to buy anything	-1.687	1.444	1.366	1	0.243	0.185	0.011	3.135
Tendency to get really nice things	4.548	1.548	8.636	1	0.003***	94.42	4.548	1960.338
Happiness to buy more things	0.365	1.074	0.115	1	0.734	1.440	0.175	11.819
Emphasis on material things	7.661	2.613	8.593	1	0.003***	2123.70	12.665	356119.4
The alignment of personality traits with purchase decisions	4.636	1.461	10.064	1	0.002***	103.17	5.882	1809.36
Inclination to pay more for products with status	2.156	1.276	2.856	1	0.091*	8.638	0.709	105.304
Perception that one is able to buy whatever.	-1.806	1.330	1.462	1	0.227	0.200	0.709	105.304
Pleasure, I have from things I possess	1.050	1.533	0.470	1	0.493	2.859	0.015	2.713
Influence of triviality on the product	1.604	1. 184	1.836	1	0.175	4.973	0.489	50.602
The desire for products with novel status	1.700	1.472	1.332	1	0. 248	5.472	0.305	98.062
Influence of prestigious products with snob appeal	2.410	1.386	3.023	1	0.082*	11.129	0.736	168.316
Constant	-9.983	3.237	9.512	1	0.002	0.000	-	-

Note: * is Significance at 10%, and *** is significance at the 1% level.

Based on the data presented in Table 10, it can be observed that the factor with the highest likelihood of influencing consumers' intentional purchase and use of counterfeit products is the emphasis on material possessions, with an odds ratio of 2123.703. Furthermore, the inclination to acquire high-quality items may not deter intentional consumers from making purchasing decisions, as they occasionally opt for replicas lacking historical significance and a resolute disposition. Its statistical significance at the 1% level further supports the validity of this evidence.

In Table 11, the propensity to pay more for a product with status is the personality factor that is proven to have a greater impact on Cameroonian consumers. The consumer's tendency to get really nice things also significantly impacts Cameroonian consumers to intentions to purchase counterfeits. Furthermore Cameroonians appear to be more concerned about purchasing items that match their personalities.

Table 12 provides a breakdown of the Pearson correlation coefficients of Sociocultural and group factors that influence Cameroonian consumers' intentions to purchase counterfeits.

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Table 11.
Summary of personality and preference factors.

Attitude to purchase counterfeits against:	Pearson correlation
Emphasis on material possessions	0.839***
The inclination to acquire high-quality possessions.	0.821***
Inclination to pay more for products with status	0.515***
Purchasing goods that match consumer personality	0.755***
Triviality of the status of the product	-0.027
Influence of a prestigious product with no snob appeal	0.247**

Note: **Significant at 0.05 level; ***significant at 0.01 level.

Table 12.
PC of sociocultural and group influences.

Attitude to purchase counterfeits against:	Pearson coefficient
Friends and family's influence on purchase choices	0.880***
Influence of the desire to belong to a particular social class	0.755***
Influence of brand knowledge on purchase decision	0.738***
Desire to avoid purchasing products linked to a certain social class	0.321***

Note: ***significant at 0.01 level.

5.5. Sociocultural and Group Influences that Affect a Customer's Intent to Procure Counterfeit Commodities

The sociocultural and group factors that significantly influence a buyer's intent to acquire imitations include peer pressure from relatives and friends, the impact of brand knowledge, the aspiration to align with specific social classes, and the motivation not to deal with certain social groups. According to Table 12, individuals who possess common social characteristics, such as friendship, tend to mutually influence each other in their purchasing and utilization of certain products and services. This phenomenon can also be observed in the context of counterfeit goods. The correlation coefficient of 0.880 between the influence of friends and relatives provides support for the previous argument. The correlation coefficient of 0.755 reveals that the aspiration to belong to a certain social class motivates consumers to replicate in the study area. Moreover, brand knowledge, with a correlation coefficient of 0.738, indicates that the advertisement of brand tendencies could further influence consumers' attitudes and buying behaviours for counterfeits. Obviously, it's possible for consumers to purposely purchase counterfeits with no name to escape the confusion with some social or economic groups that humanity habitually connects with certain trademarks. The correlation coefficient of 0.321 shows that the more certain customers attempt to circumvent the use of some brands, the more they finally mistakenly purchase reproductions. Table 13 below presents the sociocultural and group stimuli that impact the odds of a customer purposely buying counterfeits.

Table 13.
The sociocultural and group influences.

Variable	Coeff.	S. E	Wald	Df	Sig.	Odds ratio	95% C.I. for odds ratio	
							Lower	Upper
Friends influence	4.853	1.044	21.604	1	0.000***	128.08	16.550	991.210
Family influence	0.247	1.085	0.052	1	0.820	1.280	0.153	10.742
Workmates influence	-0.252	1.071	0.055	1	0.814	0.777	0.095	6.344
Neighbors influence	0.698	1.086	0.413	1	0.520	2.009	0.239	16.870
Brand awareness effect	4.166	1.189	12.285	1	0.000***	64.484	6.275	662.651
The wish to belong to a certain social class	3.768	1.171	10.355	1	0.001***	43.294	4.362	429.666
Desire to avoid a social group	1.062	1.053	1.017	1	0.313	2.894	0.367	22.806
Constant	-7.769	2.453	10.032	1	0.002	0.000	-	-

Note: *** is Significance at the 1% level.

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From Table 13, the main factor that influences the likelihood of customers purposely purchasing and using imitations the most is peer influence. There is no doubt that brand knowledge will also have a positive effect on the attitude of customers towards buying imitations. The desire to match some social status further intensifies the probability of customers being interested in counterfeits. The Table 14 summarizes the sociocultural and group influences impacting the attitudes of Cameroonian customers towards the intention to buy counterfeits.

Table 14.
PC of socio cultural and group influences.

Attitude to purchase counterfeits against:	PC
Friendship's impact on purchase decisions	0.891***
Brand awareness's influence on purchase choices	0.739***
Impact of the desire to belong to a particular social class	0.713***
Avoidance of purchasing certain goods linked to particular social groups	0 .296***
Work mates	0.206***
Neighbours	0.077

Note: *** represents significance at the 0.01 level.

The impact of colleagues and friends on consumers' attitudes towards their intent to acquire counterfeit goods significantly influences individuals in Cameroon. The impact of brand knowledge on purchase decisions also exerts influence on Cameroonians.

5.6. Risk Factors Influencing the Customers' Attitude towards the Intention to Buy Counterfeits

The following Table 15 determines the Pearson Coefficient of risk factors influencing consumers' attitudes towards the intention to buy counterfeits.

Table 15.
The Pearson coefficient of risk factors.

Attitude to purchase counterfeit against:	PC
Odds of counterfeit goods performing below expectations	-0.630***
Possibility of losing social status	-0.550***
Likelihood of false satisfaction	-0.530***
Probability of losing money when acquiring counterfeits	-0.230***
Awareness of the risks related to counterfeit	-0.200***

Note: ***significant at 0.01 level.

The possibility of losing money after purchasing counterfeits is the major risk factor that meaningfully influences customers' attitudes towards buying imitations. Other risk factors influencing Cameroonian customers' attitudes towards purchasing counterfeits are: fear of losing social status; probability of counterfeits malfunctioning; false satisfaction from consuming counterfeits; and consciousness of the overall likely risks linked to the consumption of counterfeits. Meticulously, all the risk factors above expose the propensity that discourages consumers' intentions to purchase counterfeits. All the risk factors under examination in Table 15 are meaningful at the 0.01 level. The strongest discouragement of the purchase intention of reproductions is their performance risks, with a correlation coefficient of -0.625. The financial risk of losing money with a correlation coefficient of -0.230 could also be aggravated by the counterfeit underperforming propensity. It is clear that the fear of losing social status because of the usage of reproductions decreases the Cameroonian customer's attitude towards the intention to purchase counterfeits. The contention that the consumption of counterfeits presents a psychological risk of illusory gratification to the consumer as it presents a robust association coefficient at -0.530 is furthermore an obstacle for the Cameroonian consumer's attitude towards the intention to purchase counterfeits. The correlation coefficient (-0.198) of risk-averse consumers shows that this

variable is an element of the discouragement of Cameroonian consumers from purchasing counterfeits. The followingTable 16 offers an additional analysis of the risk factors that could impact the possibility of a customer purposely purchasing counterfeits.

Table 16.
Presents a further analysis of the risk factors.

Variables	Coeff.	S. E	Wald	Df	Signif.	Odds ratio	95% C.I. for odds ratio.	
							Lower	Upper
Money loss	-0.487	0.462	1.109	1	0.292	0.615	0.248	1.521
Under performance	-3.654	0.621	34.632	1	0.000***	0.026	0.008	0.087
Loss of social status	-1.956	0.499	15.383	1	0.000***	0.141	0.053	0.376
False gratification	-1.791	0.473	14.319	1	0.000***	0.167	0.066	0.422
Knowledge of potential risk	-0.421	0.231	3.339	1	0.068*	0.656	0.418	1.031
Constant	5.071	0.777	42.579	1	0.000	159.37	-	-

Note: Significance at * 10%, and *** is statistical significance at the 1% level.

The consumption of counterfeit products is associated with social risk, performance risk, and illusory gratification, which can negatively influence consumers' attitudes and intentions to purchase such items. Table 16 provides evidence for a decline in the likelihood of purposeful acquisition of imitations, with statistical significance at both the 1% and 10% levels.

6. Discussion

The current research study explores an important and disconcerted question concerning customers' attitudes towards the intention to purchase counterfeits. The study required distinctive attention for a constant comparison of consumer attributes associated with the predilection of counterfeit purchases. The study represents an extraordinary attempt in the field of counterfeiting that integrates factors and variables focusing on non-deceptive counterfeiting. From this research, incremental insights are highlighted. In general, it is stated that Cameroonian consumers are prone to purposely purchasing reproductions, so they are associated with the non-deceptive counterfeiting process. The results established in previous research show a significant and strong correlation between attitudes and intentions to acquire counterfeit products [11, 21, 52]. Attitude appears to be the most crucial antecedent that influences consumers' purchase intention amongst the variables examined in this study, while intention to purchase counterfeits is acknowledged to be the main current purchase behaviour predictor. The findings also confirm that attitudes towards counterfeiting are a passage to the intention to purchase reproductions [11, 21, 52]. To restrain counterfeiting, it is indispensable to begin by influencing customers' attitudes and intentions towards counterfeits. Regarding the utility theory and the functional benefits of counterfeits, customers more frequently purchase counterfeits because they believe that counterfeits may deliver the same quality, reliability, and performance as original outcomes.

Additionally, numerous factors are acknowledged as having an incremental influence on the correlations between attitude and intention to purchase counterfeits. Ang, et al. [11] recognised that social factors affect attitude while attitude, in consequence, influences intention to act in such ways. Influence sociocultural and influence groups affecting Cameroonian consumers. Perceptions and opinions from buyers and users of imitations more often have a positive impact on others. The theory of planned behaviour demonstrated that people who have great consideration for friends and relatives and value their purchases of counterfeits are really sympathetic about their attitude towards counterfeiting. The findings resulting from this study validate the above argument. Analyses about certain other sorts of consumers' misconduct identify friends and family as factors deeply influencing attitudes towards the achievement of illegal behaviour [53, 54].

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The study furthermore corroborates results from earlier research stipulating that personality factors positively impact consumers' attitudes towards intent to buy imitations [51, 52]. This argument underscores the significance of educating both strategy creators and brand administrators about the importance of cultivating and enlightening customers regarding the use of replicas. Evidently, there is a clear indication that consumers derive satisfaction from possessing superior items in their daily lives. This is allusive due to the fact that imitations could offer satisfaction to costumers and consumers who are keen to display their status.

Marketing factors likewise have been discovered to significantly impact Cameroonian consumers' attitudes towards the intention to purchase reproductions. Messages and information delivered focusing on counterfeiting encouragement create positive impacts on consumers' attitudes towards the intention to purchase replicas, even if parallel messages highlight counterfeiting as terrorism nourishment.

The economic factors that have been previously recognized in studies conducted by Gentry, et al. [5], Cordell, et al. [13], and Bloch, et al. [18] are additional contributors to the attitudes of Cameroonian consumers regarding their intent to obtain counterfeit items. Counterfeits are generally considered to be inexpensive and a probable substitute, permitting a consumer to obliterate original items on an ordinary basis with the objective of improving their status image.

The attitude towards counterfeits is positive in circumstances where consumers believe that the price reflects product quality. Here is the confirmation of the hypothesis indicating that all low-income earners present positive attitudes towards imitations [55]. The respondent's high knowledge of risk awareness and their high level of literacy confirm the above clarification.

This study's finding assumes that the type of risk influences customers' decision-making regarding attitudes towards the intention to purchase counterfeits. Transmitting critical messages about the risks of counterfeits would barely impact intentions to purposely purchase replicas. The purchase of imitations is strongly related to exposure to financial risk because imitations might be more costly than original items at a minimum reduction.

From analyses and conferring on the data, economic factors more than any other variable under inspection elucidate the dissimilarities in Cameroonian attitudes towards the intention to purchase counterfeits. Figure 4 summarizes the proportion of the response variable dissimilarities presented by the linear model. Standard errors are fixed in parentheses.

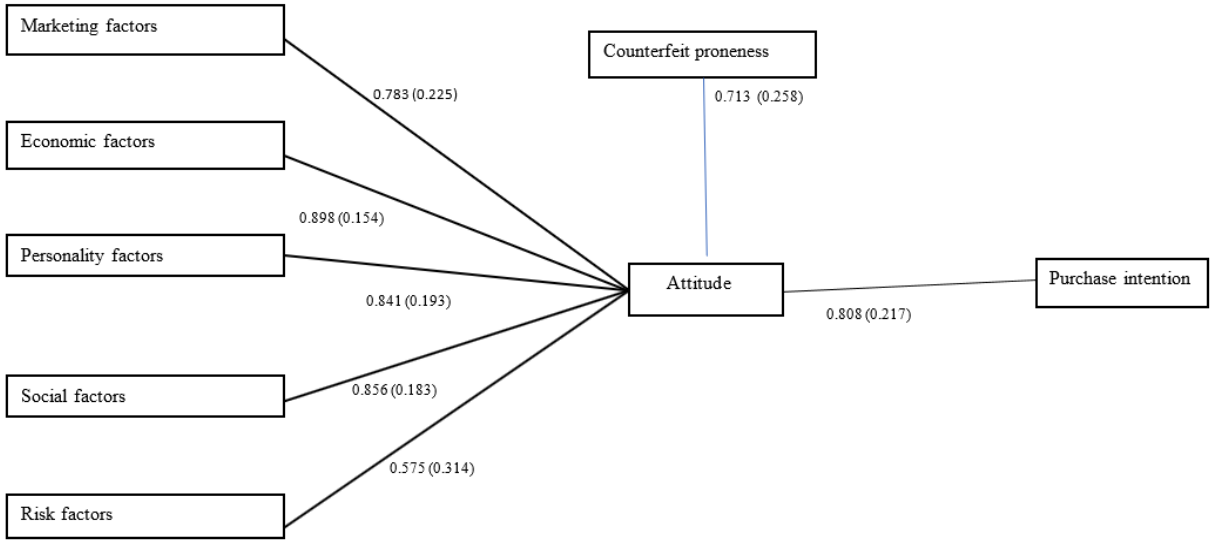

Figure 4.
Coefficients of determination for the model of Cameroonian.

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7. Conclusion

As hypothesized, economic, marketing, social, and personality factors confirmed their influence on counterfeiting attitudes, which in turn stimulate purchasing intentions [27, 52]. Results revealed that the purchase of replicas does not depend solely on economic status. The government, manufacturers, and managers should all benefit from the results of this study. The government would need to strengthen counterfeiting laws and acts. Managers should seek out information and resources that aid in restraining and combating counterfeiters. Manufacturers, however, ought to permanently communicate differentiations about the risks or losses associated with the buying of imitations instead of constantly advertising the profits of buying authentic items? Governments, organizations, manufacturers, and managers have to initiate and launch cross-border anti-counterfeiting crusades to dissuade and penalize, for example, travelers who have counterfeit products. Some limitations are related to this study. Amongst the limitations is the fact that China is recognized as a country where counterfeiting is tolerated, even though the Chinese government has, these last decades, multiplied efforts to tackle the phenomenon. The limitation also concerns the method used for the research, as not many consumers were sampled. Future orientations of this research can be the application of the study to other regions and countries or comparative studies between regions, countries, regions, and countries.

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Competing Interests:

The authors declare that they have no competing interests.

Authors' Contributions:

All authors contributed equally to the conception and design of the study. All authors have read and agreed to the published version of the manuscript.

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